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RAMAYANA

TALE OF THE EXILE LOVERS

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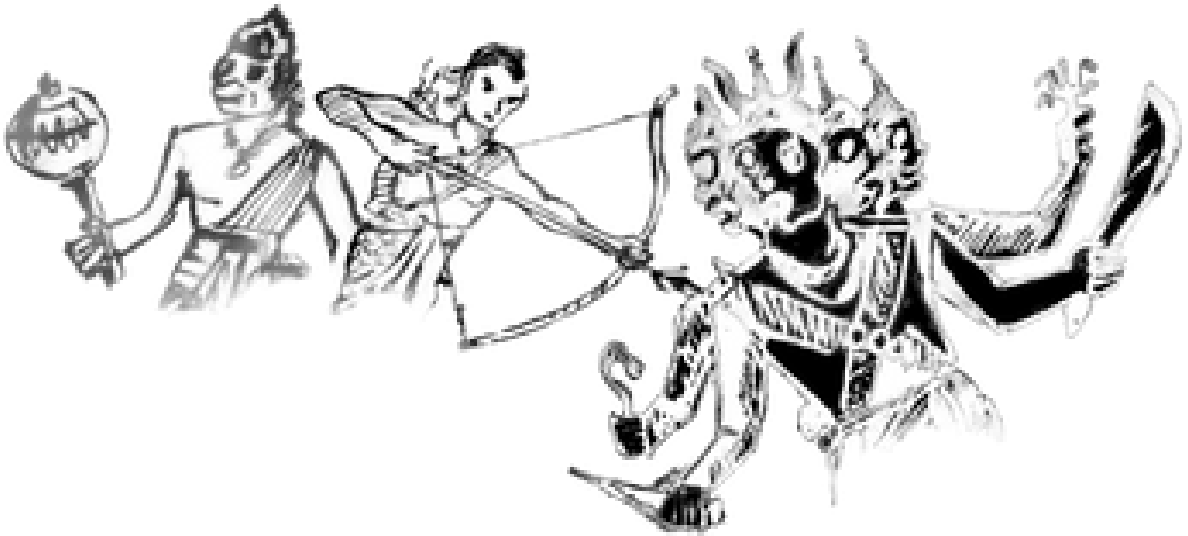

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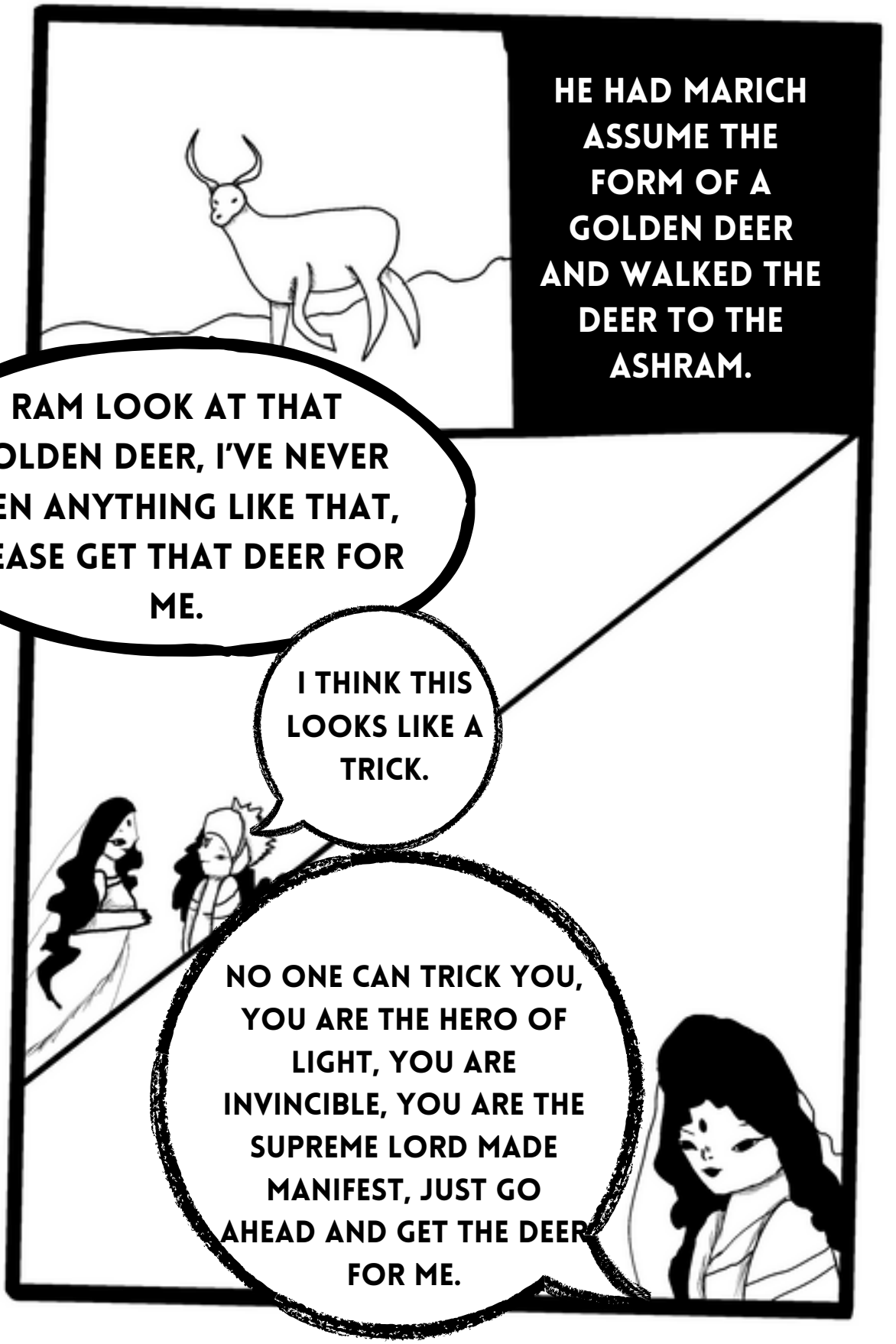
HE HAD MARICH ASSUME THE FORM OF A GOLDEN DEER AND WALKED THE DEER TO THE ASHRAM.
RAM LOOK AT THAT GOLDEN DEER, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT, PLEASE GET THAT DEER FOR ME.
I THINK THIS LOOKS LIKE A TRICK.
NO ONE CAN TRICK YOU, YOU ARE THE HERO OF LIGHT, YOU ARE INVINCIBLE, YOU ARE THE SUPREME LORD MADE MANIFEST, JUST GO AHEAD AND GET THE DEER FOR ME.

SITA, YOU HAVE BEEN IN THE FOREST WITH ME FOR ALL THESE YEARS (IT HAD BEEN THIRTEEN YEARS ALREADY, ONE MORE YEAR WAS LEFT TO COMPLETE) AND I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GIVE YOU ANY COMFORT WHATSOEVER, SO CERTAINLY I WILL GET THE GOLDEN DEER FOR YOU EVEN THOUGH I THINK IT IS AN ILLUSION. LAKSHMAN, YOU STAY HERE AND GUARD SITA.

AND SO RAM WENT OFF IN PURSUIT OF THE GOLDEN DEER, AND WHEN THE GOLDEN DEER RAN FARTHER AND FARTHER AWAY FROM THE ASHRAM AND THE HERMITAGE, RAM KNEW THAT THERE WAS SOME DECEIT AND TRICKERY GOING ON, STILL HE MOVED IN PURSUIT.

FINALLY, HE WAS WELL AWAY FROM THE ASHRAM HERMITAGE AND HE TOOK THE ARROW IN HIS BOW, AND HE SHOT THE ARROW AND IT LANDED INTO THE CHEST OF THE DEER, AND THE DEER IMMEDIATELY BECAME A DEMON.

AND HE CALLED OUT IN RAM'S VOICE, "LAKSHMAN, I'M SHOT, I'M INJURED, I'M IN THE FOREST SURROUNDED BY DEMONS, AND I'M WOUNDED AND I'M UNARMED AND THEY ARE GOING TO DEFEAT ME, PLEASE COME IMMEDIATELY AND HELP." AND THE DEMON DIED.

LAKSHMAN, GO HELP YOUR BROTHER!"
SITA, SITA MAIYA, NO ONE CAN HURT RAM, HE'S THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS, THIS MUST BE SOME TRICKERY OR DECEIT.
HOW CAN I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS TRICKERY OR DECEIT WHEN MY HUSBAND IS CALLING OUT TO ME IN ANGUISH, PLEASE GO AND HELP HIM!
SITA MAIYA, I'VE BEEN ORDERED BY THE LORD TO STAY HERE AND GUARD YOU.
I AM THE QUEEN, AND I ORDER YOU TO GO AND FIND YOUR BROTHER!

SITA, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I AM DISOBEYING AN ORDER FROM MY BROTHER, BUT BECAUSE YOU HAVE GIVEN ME ANOTHER ORDER, I AM GOING TO FOLLOW YOUR INSTRUCTIONS. YOU GO INTO THE HOUSE, AND DON'T COME OUT."

SITA WENT IN TO THE HOUSE. AND LAKSHMAN TOOK AN ARROW, AND HE SAID THE MANTRA, AND HE DREW A LINE IN THE SAND ALL THE WAY AROUND THE HOUSE, WHICH IS CALLED A LAKSHMAN REKHA. HE SAID, "NO ONE CAN CROSS THIS LINE. SITA, YOU STAY IN THE HOUSE, NOT FOR ANY REASON AT ALL WILL YOU CROSS THIS LINE. DON'T COME OUT OF THE HOUSE. AS LONG AS YOUR IN THE HOUSE YOU WILL BE SAFE, AND I WILL GO FIND RAM."

AS SOON AS LAKSHMAN DEPARTED AND TRAVELED SOME DISTANCE, RAVANA, STANDING BY IN THE WOODS, CHANGED HIS APPEARANCE AND CAME IN THE DISGUISE OF AN OLD SADHU. AND HE CAME TO THE HERMITAGE GATE

AND HE SAID, "BHIKSHAM DEHI, BHAVATI BHIKSHAM DEHI." SITA WAS STUNNED, "WHAT SADHU WILL COME TO ME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY, ASKING BHIKSHA. IT IS MY DHARMA AS AN ARYAN WOMAN TO GIVE ALMS TO ANY ONE WHO ASKS. SHE SAID TO HIM, "PLEASE, YOU STAND THERE AT THE GATE AND I WILL BRING YOU SOME FOOD."

SITA WENT INSIDE THE HOUSE TO GET SOME FOOD, AND RAVANA CAME TO THE HOUSE AND HE TRIED TO CROSS THE LINE. AND HE COULDN'T. EVERY TIME HE STUCK HIS FINGER OVER THE LINE, BLAZING FIRE WOULD JUMP UP AND STING HIM. HE PUT HIS FOOT THERE, AND THE FIRE BURNED HIS FOOT. AND IN EVERYWAY RAVANA TRIED TO CROSS THE LAKSHMAN REKHA, HE WAS UNABLE. AND THEN HE UNDERSTOOD.

SITA, CAME TO THE LINE, AND REMEMBEREDLAKSHMAN'S WORD. SHE SAID, "SADHU BABA, PLEASE, PUT YOUR HANDS NEXT TO THIS LINE, AND I WILL HAND YOU THE FOOD OVER THE LINE." AND RAVANA SAID, "WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM, I'M A BEGGAR THAT YOU WILL FEED ME FROM AFAR, YOU WON'T BRING THE FOOD TO ME AND LET ME SIT DOWN AND HAVE AN ASAN AND A GLASS OF WATER AND A CLEAN PLACE TO ENJOY MY MEAL! WHAT KIND OF WOMAN ARE YOU? WELL, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT KIND OF SADHU AM I. I SEE THAT YOU'RE TRAVELING IN THE FOREST WITH YOUR HUSBAND AND HIS BROTHER, WITH TWO MEN. I SEE THAT YOUR HUSBAND HAS GONE OFF IN PURSUIT OF A DEER. I SEE THAT YOUR HUSBAND HAS BEEN WOUNDED IN BATTLE, AND THAT HIS BROTHER HAS LEFT THE HERMITAGE, AND HE IS GOING TO HELP. I SEE THAT I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A CURSE THAT YOUR HUSBAND WILL DIE IN THIS BATTLE, AND RAVANA TOOK SOME WATER. AND SITA SAID, "NO, NO, NO, STOP! DON'T GIVE A CURSE TO MY HUSBAND, I'LL COME AND GIVE YOU THE FOOD!"

RAVANA PUT DOWN THE WATER, SITA CROSSED THE LINE, AND RAVANA TOOK HIS ACTUAL DRESS, AND HIS ACTUAL COMPORTMENT AND LEFT HIS DISGUISE AS A SADHU. AND SAID, "SITA, YOU BELONG WITH ME." AND HE PICKED HER UP AND CARRIED HER AWAY.

RAMAYANA

HANUMAN POTENTIAL

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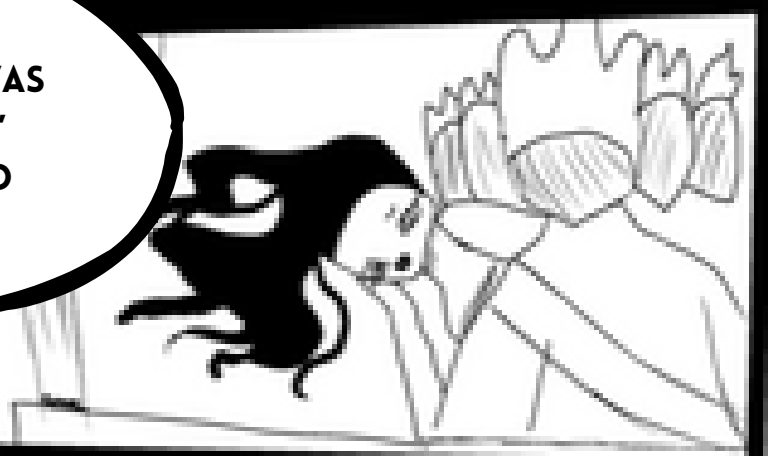
SAMPATI WAS AN OLD EAGLE. HE LIVED ALONE ON A ROCK ON THE SOUTHERN SEASHORE.
ONE DAY, HE NOTICED THAT THE BEACH WAS CROWDED WITH MONKEYS. HE ASKED THE MONKEYS WHAT HAD BROUGHT THEM TO THE SEASHORE. WHERE WERE THEY FROM?

RAMA, THE PRINCE OF AYODHYA WAS LIVING IN THE FOREST WITH HIS WIFE, SITA, AND BROTHER, LAKSHMANA. WHEN THE TWO BROTHERS WERE AWAY FROM THEIR COTTAGE, SOMEONE CARRIED AWAY SITA. OUR KING, SUGRIVA, IS A FRIEND OF RAMA. HE HAS SENT US IN SEARCH OF SITA.

AN OLD BIRD REMEMBERED HAVING SEEN A WOMAN BEING CARRIED AWAY BY RAVANA, A RAKSHASA KING.

"SO, THAT WOMAN WAS RAMA'S WIFE, SITA!" EXCLAIMED THE OLD EAGLE.



"RAVANA TOOK HER TO HIS ISLAND FORTRESS OF LANKA," SAID THE OLD BIRD. "LANKA IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS SEA-HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY."
"LET'S JUMP ACROSS THE SEA,"
WAIT,TELL ME FIRST, WHAT IS YOUR POTENTIAL?

THE MONKEY BLINKED. “WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY POTENTIAL?” HE ASKED.

“WHAT IS YOUR CAPACITY TO JUMP? I MEAN, HOW FAR DO YOU THINK YOU CAN JUMP?” ASKED THE MONKEY COMMANDER.
THE MONKEY THOUGHT IT OVER AND SAID, “20 FEET.”

“THEN YOU WILL FALL RIGHT INTO THE SEA,” SCREAMED A LITTLE MONKEY AND EVERYBODY LAUGHED.

“SILENCE!” SHOUTED THE COMMANDER.
ANOTHER MONKEY COULD JUMP 100 FEET, ANOTHER 200 FEET AND SO ON. BUT NO MONKEY THOUGHT HE COULD JUMP HUNDREDS OF MILES TO REACH LANKA.
“THERE IS ONE HERO AMONG US WHO CAN LEAP TO LANKA” WISE JAMBUVAN SAID, POINTING OUT TO A MONKEY WHO WAS SITTING ALL ALONE.

YOU MEAN HANUMAN?
BUT HE IS NOT EVEN TALKING. HE IS SO QUIET.
THAT IS BECAUSE HANUMAN DOES NOT KNOW HIS OWN POTENTIAL,LET US SURROUND HIM AND CHANT A MANTRA, WHICH WILL MAKE HIM DISCOVER HIS CAPABILITY.
SO, ALL THE MONKEYS SURROUNDED HANUMAN AND STARTED CHANTING THE MANTRA, "HANUMAN, YOU CAN! HANUMAN, YOU CAN! YOU CAN DO IT, HANUMAN!" THE MONKEYS CHANTED LOUDER, "HANUMAN, YOU CAN! HANUMAN, YOU CAN!"

AS THE MONKEYS CHANTED, HANUMAN STARTED GROWING IN SIZE. HE GREW BIGGER AND BIGGER. HE STOOD UP, STRETCHED HIS HANDS AND TOOK ONE GIANT LEAP ACROSS THE SEA AS THE CHANT CONTINUED: "HANUMAN, YOU CAN. HANUMAN YOU CAN!"

HANUMAN LANDED IN LANKA, WHERE HE FOUND SITA, AND GAVE HER RAMA'S MESSAGE. HE BROUGHT SITA'S MESSAGE TO RAMA. HANUMAN THANKED HIS FRIENDS FOR HELPING HIM DISCOVER HIS POTENTIAL.

RAMAYANA

SITA ALONE

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LORD RAMA'S WIFE SITA WAS ABDUCTED BY RAVANA WHO DUPED THE DEVOUT LADY IN DISGUISE OF A SAINT. RAVANA DRAGGED SITA FORCEFULLY ON TO HIS AERIAL VEHICLE PUSHPAKA VIMANA AND HEADED TO HIS KINGDOM DOWN SOUTH.

SITA WAS HELD CAPTIVE IN ASHOKA VATIKA, ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GARDENS EVER DESIGNED ON EARTH. RAVANA TRIED TO WIN HER HEART BY SHOWERING HER WITH RICHES BUT A CHASTE LADY THAT SHE WAS, SITA REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE LUXURIES AND INSTEAD WAITED FOR HER HUSBAND TO FREE HER FROM THE DEMON KING.

AFTER SEEKING HELP FROM SUGREEVA'S VANARA SENA, RAMA WANTED HANUMAN TO TRACE SITA'S LOCATION. HANUMAN, WHO WAS OBLIVIOUS OF HIS OWN STRENGTHS, WAS REMINDED OF HIS VALOUR BY JAMBHAVAN. ON REALISING THAT HE COULD FLY, HANUMAN TOOK A GIANT LEAP INTO THE SKIES AND FLEW IN THE DIRECTION OF LANKA.ON REACHING RAVANA'S KINGDOM, HANUMAN STARTED SEARCHING FOR SITA. FINALLY AFTER HOURS OF DESPERATELY LOOKING FOR THE DIVINE LADY, HANUMAN FOUND HER SITTING UNDER A TREE AT ASHOKA VATIKA. HE QUIETLY TRANSFORMED INTO A TINY APE AND WENT NEAR HER TO INFORM ABOUT LORD RAMA'S MISSION.

TO PROVE HIS IDENTITY, HE HANDED OVER LORD RAMA'S RING TO HER. SITA, WHOSE HAPPINESS KNEW NO BOUNDS, BLESSED HANUMAN AND WAS CONFIDENT THAT SHE WOULD BE FREED SOON FROM THE CLUTCHES OF RAVANA.

SHE COULD HAVE EASILY FLOWN OUT OF LANKA ALONG WITH HANUMAN. BUT SHE CHOSE NOT TO DO SO BECAUSE:

SHE HAD FAITH IN HER HUSBAND'S POWER TO ANNIHILATE THE DEMON THAT HAD ABDUCTED AND HUMILIATED HER. SO SHE WANTED HER HUSBAND TO END RAVANA.SHE WANTED TO BE FREED RESPECTFULLY AND WITH DIGNITY. HENCE SHE WANTED TO WAIT FOR RAMA'S ARRIVAL INSTEAD OF ESCAPING FROM LANKA. SHE WAS A DEVOUT WIFE AND NEVER LET ANY MAN TOUCH HER (THE ONLY EXCEPTION WAS WHEN SHE WAS FORCEFULLY DRAGGED BY RAVANA). SO SHE POLITELY REFUSED TO ACCEPT HANUMAN'S HUMBLE REQUEST OF JOINING HIM ON HIS TRIP BACK TO THE PLACE WHERE RAMA TOOK SHELTER ALONG WITH THE VANARA SENA.

HANUMAN RESPECTFULLY ACCEPTED SITA'S DECISION AFTER TAKING HER CHOODA MANI (DECORATIVE HAIR CLIP) AS A TOKEN OF IDENTIFICATION FOR LORD RAMA'S SAKE.

RAMAYANA

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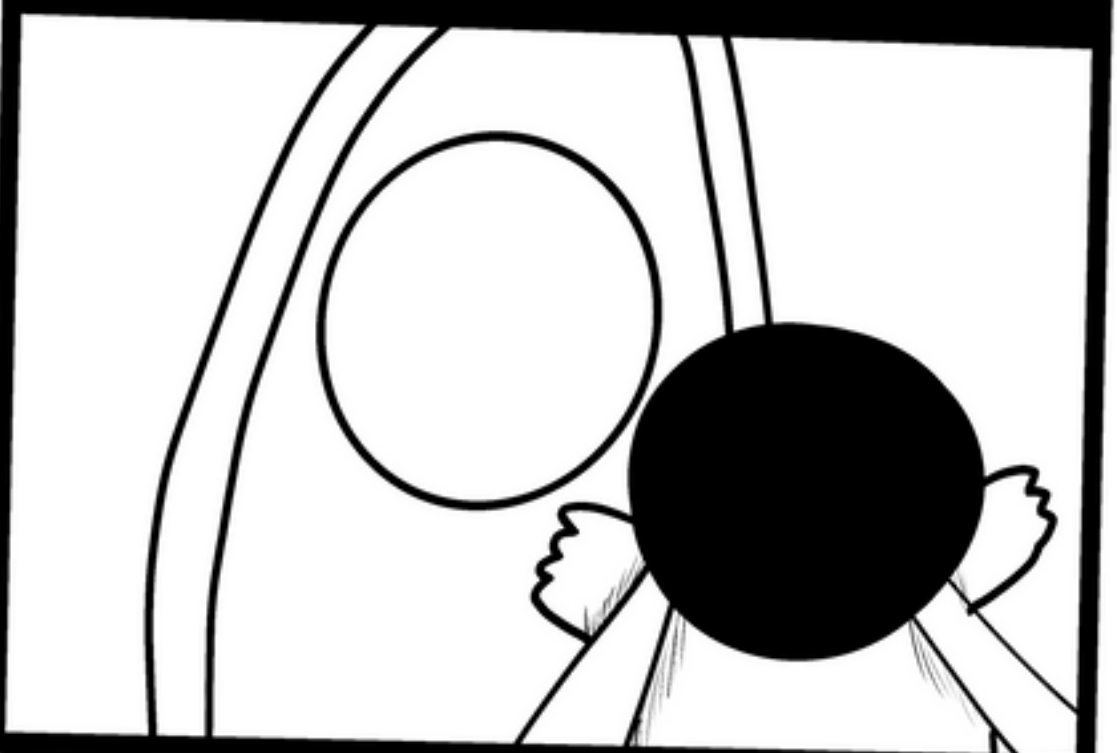
(SHORT) RAMA WANTS THE MOON

IT WAS THE DAY OF THE FULL MOON. KAUSALYA WAS FEEDING HER SON, RAMA, SHOWING HIM THE FULL MOON IN THE SKY.
GIVE ME,
GIVE ME
KAUSALYA THOUGHT RAMA WAS ASKING FOR MORE FOOD. SHE TRIED TO FEED HIM ANOTHER MORSEL. THE CHILD PUSHED HER AWAY, REPEATING HIS DEMAND.

KAUSALYA LAUGHED AT THE INNOCENCE OF HER CHILD. SHE HUGGED HIM. BUT LITTLE RAMA WAS STILL UNDER THE SPELL OF THE MOON.

HE STARTED CRYING.
KING DASHRATHA CAME RUNNING; SO DID HIS OTHER TWO QUEENS, SUMITRA AND KAIKEYI. THEY ALL TRIED TO PACIFY RAMA AND DIVERT HIS ATTENTION. BUT THE LITTLE FELLOW WOULD NOT BE DIVERTED. HE WANTED THE MOON.
THEN KAIKEYI HAD AN IDEA. SHE RAN TO HER ROOM AND RETURNED WITH A MIRROR. SHE HANDED IT OVER TO RAMA.
THE CHILD LOOKED AT THE MIRROR AND SAW THE MOON'S REFLECTION IN IT.



RAMAYANA
BATTLE OF LANKA
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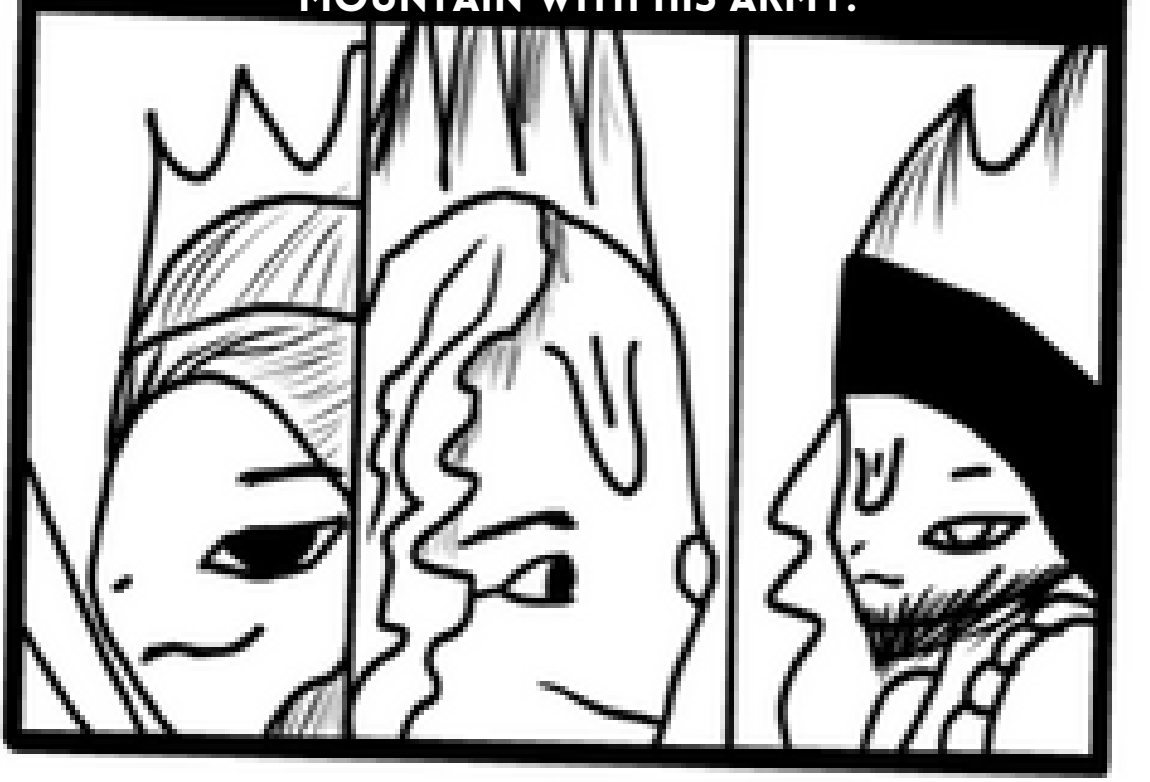
AGITATED TO KNOW THAT RAM HAD ARRIVED IN LANKA AND WAS STATIONED AT SUVELA MOUNTAIN ALONG WITH HIS ARMY, RAVAN APP FOR CONJURING TRICKS. HE INFORMED SITA THAT HER HUSBAND ALONG WITH HIS ARMY HAD BEEN KILLED IN BATTLE, HE PRODUCED BEFORE HER, RAM'S HEAD ALONG WITH BOW AND ARROWS CREATED WITH VIDYUJJUHA'S CONJURING TRICK.

SITA WAS SHOCKED, FELL UNCONSCIOUS AT THE SIGHT OF RAM'S HEAD AND BOW. SHE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND ASKED RAVAN TO KILL HER ALSO, SO THAT SHE WOULD JOIN HER HUSBAND IN HEAVEN. AND SHE MET SARAMA IN HEVEN AND INFORMED HER THAT RAMA IS STILL ALIVE IN BATTLE.

IN THE MEANTIME, RAVAN WAS ABRUPTLY CALLED AWAY BY AN EMISSARY AND AFTER CONSULTATION WITH HIS MINISTERS, PREPARED HIS ARMY FOR ACTION AGAINST THE FORCES OF RAM.A RAKSHASNY NAMED SARAM ASSURED SITA THAT RAM WAS STILL ALIVE. RAM, SUGRIV, HANUMAN AND OTHERS WERE DELIBERATING ON THE WAYS AND MEANS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THEIR MISSION, VIBHISHAN INFORMED THAT HIS SPIES HAD RETURNED AFTER GATHERING THE REQUIRED INFORMATION ABOUT RAVAN'S ARRANGEMENTS AT THE FOUR GATES OF THEIST. AFTER HEARING VIBHISHAN'S INFORMATION, RAM ORDERED NILA, ANGAD, HANUMAN AND OTHERS TO STORM THE FOUR GATES AND DECIDED TO STAY ON SUVELA MOUNTAIN WITH HIS ARMY.



THE RAKSHAS BROKE THE NEWS TO RAVAN ABOUT LANKA HAVING BEEN LAID SIEGE TO BY THE MONKEYS. RAVAN SURVEYED THE INNUMERABLE TROOPS OF MONKEYS, OCCUPYING THE ENTIRE CITY OF LANKA. MEANWHILE, RAM ORDERED TO THE MONKEYS TO DESTROY THE ENEMIES FORTHWITH.

THE MONKEYS STARTED DEMOLISHING VARIOUS IMPORTANT DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES OF THE CITY OF LANKA AND BESIEGE ALL THE CITY-GATES. RAVAN ALSO COMMANDED HIS ARMY TO COMMENCE COMBAT. RAKSHAS BEGIN TO STRIKE THE MONKEYS WITH THEIR WEAPONS AND THE MONKEYS RESPONDED THE STRIKE WITH TREES, MOUNTAIN-TOPS, NAILS AND TEETH.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF HIS BATTLE WITH RAM'S ARMY, INDRAJIT, RAVAN'S SON USED ALL HIS FORCE TO CAST HAVOC ON THE ARMIES OF SUGRIVA.

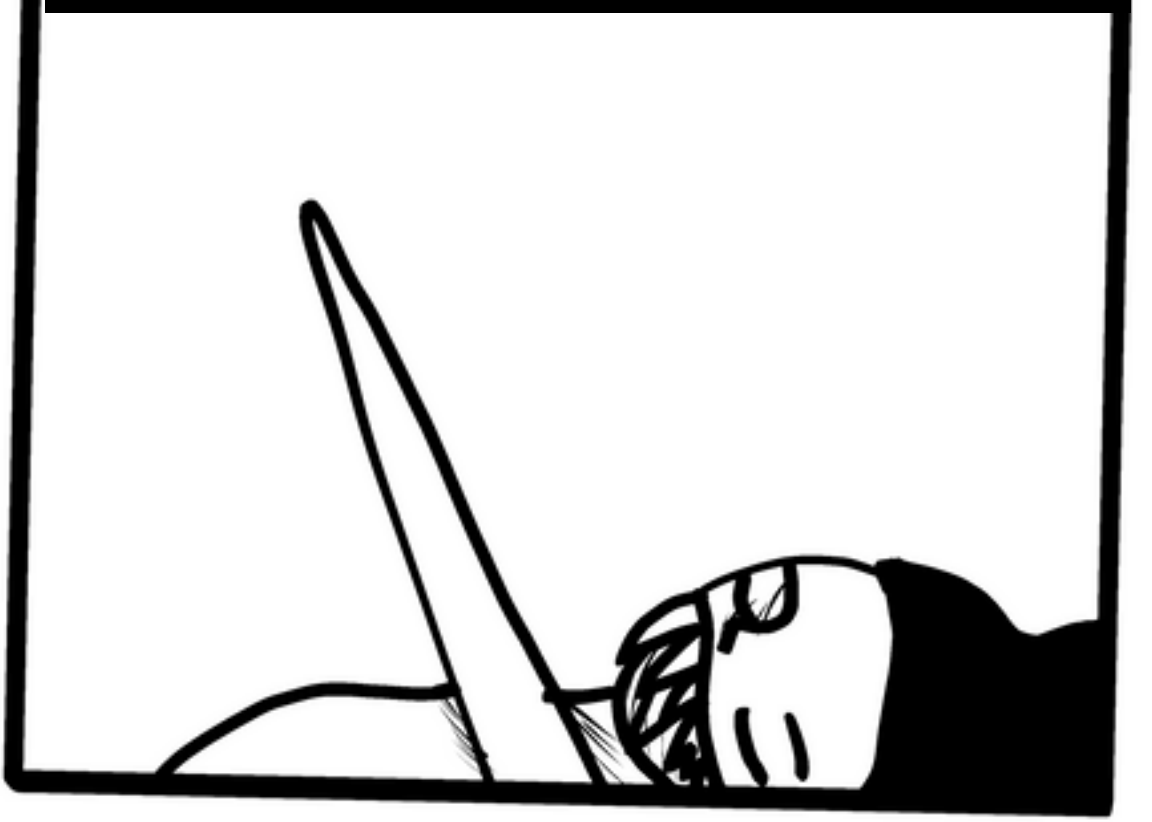
THIS LAKSHMAN APPEARED BEFORE HIM, AND FOUGHT A FIERCE BATTLE WITH INDRAJIT, WHEN INDRAJIT REALISED THAT LAKSHMAN COULD NOT BE WON OVER, HE STARTED USING HIS SUPREME MAGICAL POWERS, DARTING ACROSS THE CLOUDS AND SKIES LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING. HE COMBINED HIS SKILLS OF SORCERY AND DECEPTIVE WARFARE, REPEATEDLY VANISHING AND REAPPEARING. INDRAJIT USED HIS FIERCEST AND DEADLIEST WEAPON, SHAKTI. LAKSHMAN FELL UNCONSCIOUS, POISED TO DIE PRECISELY AT THE FOLLOWING SUNRISE.

HANUMAN WAS ASKED TO BRING THE PHYSICIAN OF LANKA CALLED SUSHENA. SUSHENA TOLD RAM THAT THERE EXISTED A HERB CALLED SANJIVANI WHICH COULD ONLY BE FOUND IN THE HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINS. IT WAS THE ONLY HOPE TO SAVE LAKSMANA. HANUMAN WAS SENT TO BRING THE SANJIVANI FROM DUNAGIRI MOUNTAIN IN THE HIMALAYAS, TO REVIVE LAKSMAN. WHEN RAVAN CAME TO KNOW ALL ABOUT THIS, HE INSTRUCTED KALNEMI, THE DEMON TO BLOCK THE PATH O HANUMAN.FKALNEMI REPLIED THAT HE CANNOT BLOCK THE PATH OF SUCH A MIGHTY BEING WHO HAD SINGLE HANDEDLY BURNT LANKA. WHY DON'T YOU COMPROMISE WITH SRI RAM?" RAVAN BECAME FURIOUS. KALNEMI THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO DIE AT THE HANDS OF THE MESSENGER OF SRI RAM, THAN TO DIE FACING THE WRATH OF RAVAN.

KALNEMI THEN CREATED A BEAUTIFUL TEMPLE AND A POND WITH HIS ILLUSIONARY POWERS. WHEN HANUMAN SAW THE TEMPLE AND THE POND, HE DECIDED TO TAKE SOME REST. HANUMAN WENT TO KALNEMI AND GREETED HIM. KALNEMI PRAISED RAM AND SAID-

"A BATTLE IS BEING FOUGHT BETWEEN RAM AND RAVAN. I CAN FORESEE RAM'S VICTORY."

HANUMAN WAS PLEASED. HE ASKED FOR SOME WATER, AS HE WAS VERY THIRSTY. KALNEMI GAVE SOME WATER FROM HIS KAMANDAL. BUT HANUMAN'S THIRST WAS NOT QUENCHED. HE ASKED FOR SOME MORE. KALNEMI THEN SHOWED HIM THE POND. AS SOON AS HANUMAN ENTERED THE POND, A CROCODILE GOT HOLD OF HIS LEGS BUT HANUMAN KILLED THE CROCODILE IN NO TIME. THE CROCODILE WAS IN FACT AN ELF THAT HAD BECOME A CROCODILE BECAUSE OF A CURSE. SHE REVEALED THE REAL IDENTITY OF KALNEMI. HANUMAN THEN KILLED KALNEMI.



RAVAN, ON LEARNING THAT KALNEMI HAD BEEN KILLED BY HANUMAN, SUMMONED SURYA (SUN) TO RISE BEFORE ITS APPOINTED TIME BECAUSE THE PHYSICIAN SUSHENA HAD SAID THAT LAKSHMAN WOULD DIE IF UNTREATED BY DAYBREAK.

HANUMAN REALISED THE DANGER, AND BECOMING MANY TIMES HIS NORMAL SIZE, DETAINED THE SUN GOD TO PREVENT THE BREAK OF DAY. HE THEN RESUMED HIS SEARCH FOR THE PRECIOUS HERB SANJIVANI, BUT, FOUND HIMSELF UNABLE TO IDENTIFY WHICH HERB IT WAS, HE LIFTED THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN.

HANUMANA MADE GOOD SPEED TOWARDS LANKA, SUDDENLY HE WAS SHOT BY AN ARROW AS HE APPROACHED NANDIGRAM. HANUMAN WAS MISTAKEN TO BE A DEMON BY BHARAT. HANUMAN FELL TO THE GROUND TOGETHER WITH THE GREAT HILL. HANUMAN REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND RECOGNISED BHARAT IS RAM'S BROTHER AND EXPLAINED TO BHARATA THAT HE WAS MOVING THE MOUNTAIN TO SAVE HIS OWN BROTHER, LAKSHMAN. BHARAT, FELT VERY SORRY, OFFERED TO FIRE AN ARROW TO LANKA, WHICH HANUMAN COULD RIDE IN ORDER TO REACH HIS DESTINATION MORE EASILY. BUT HANUMAN DECLINED THE OFFER, PREFERRING TO FLY ON HIS OWN AND HE CONTINUED HIS JOURNEY WITH HIS INJURED LEG. HE CONTINUED ON TO LANKA AND DELIVERED IT TO THE BATTLEFIELD IN LANKA. SUSHENA THEN IDENTIFIED AND ADMINISTERED THE HERB, AND LAKSHMAN WAS SAVED. RAM EMBRACED HANUMAN, DECLARING HIM AS DEAR TO HIM AS HIS OWN BROTHER. HANUMAN RELEASED SURYA FROM HIS GRIP, AND ASKED FORGIVENESS, AS THE SUN WAS ALSO HIS GURU.

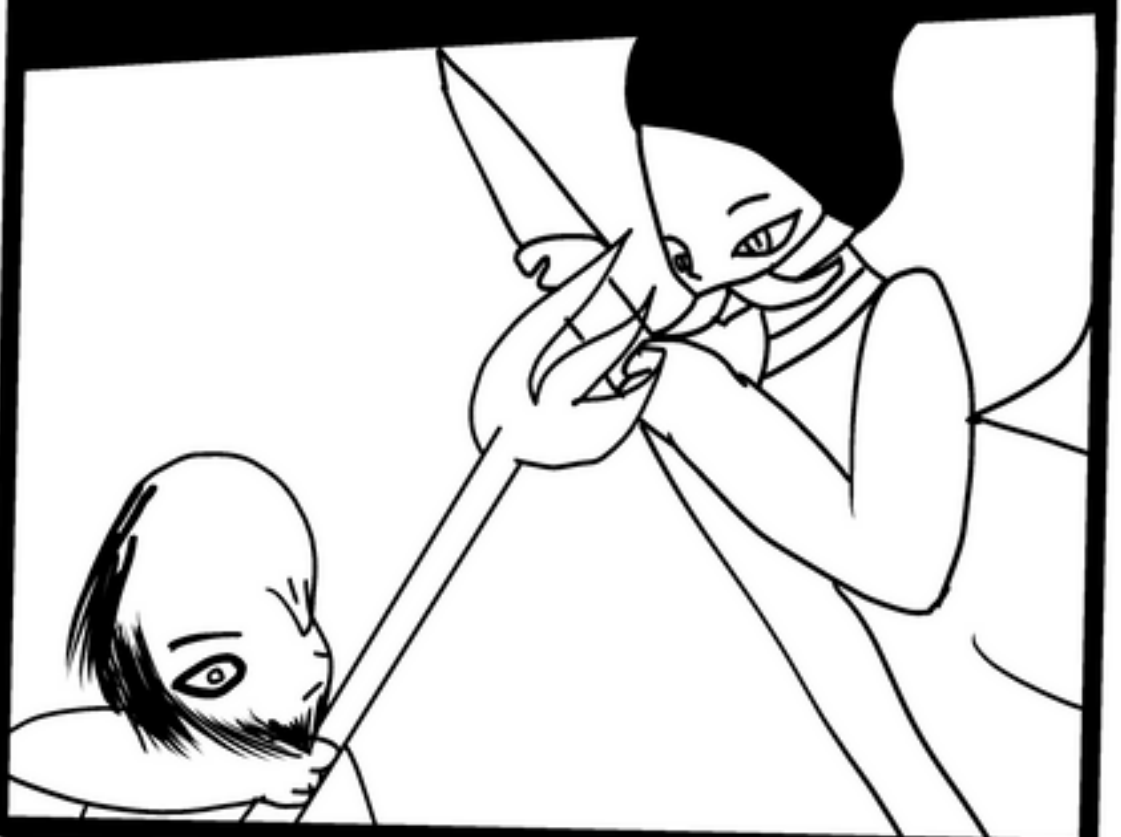
KUMBHAKARNA IN YUDDHA KANDA: RAMAYANA RAVAN GOT THE NEWS OF LAKSMAN'S RECOVERY AND DECIDED TO AWAKEN HIS SLEEPING BROTHER KUMBHAKARN, AND REQUESTED HIM TO COME. KUMBHAKARN SAW HIS WORRIED BROTHER. KUMBHAKARNA ASKED RAVANA ABOUT THE NATURE OF WORK TO BE DONE BY HIM AND WHETHER HE HAD TO KILL ANYONE. RAVAN REPLIED THAT RAM HAD COME WITH TROOPS OF MONKEYS AFTER CROSSING THE OCEAN BY A BRIDGE, TO WAGE A BATTLE.

KUMBHAKARN, FIRST ACCUSED RAVAN OF HIS UNWORTHY ACT BUT ASSURED HIM THAT HE WOULD NEUTRALISE THAT DISHONOUR BY KILLING THE ENEMIES. RAVAN ASKED HIM TO PROCEED TO THE BATTLE-FRONT. THEN, KUMBHAKARN REASSURED AND PROMISED RAVAN, SAYING THAT HE WOULD KILL RAM IN BATTLE. RAVAN GOT PLEASED AND ORDERED KUMBHAKARN TO WIPE OFF THE MONKEYS TOGETHER WITH RAM AND LAKSHMAN IN BATTLE.

VIBHISHAN APPRISED RAM ABOUT KUMBHAKARN AND NARRATED HIS STORY OF HIS GETTING CURSE FROM BRAHMA THAT KUMBHAKARN WOULD KEEP SLEEPING FOR EVERY SIX MONTHS AND THEN WAKING UP FOR A DAY IN A YEAR HANUMAN STRIKED KUMBHAKARN WITH A LARGE MOUNTAIN-PEAK AND INJURED HIM SEVERELY. IN REPLY, KUMBHAKARN STRIKED ON HANUMAN'S CHEST WITH HIS SPIKE. THEN, KUMBHAKARN STRIKED OTHER MONKEY-CHIEFS WHO ATTACKED HIM. WHEN ANGADA, THE LEADER OF THE MONKEYS, ATTACKED KUMBHAKARN, THE LATTER STRIKED ANGADA VIOLENTLY AND ANGADA FELL UNCONSCIOUS. THEN, KUMBHAKARN BEGAN HIS ATTACK ON SUGRIV. WHEN KUMBHAKARN THREW HIS SPIKE TOWARDS SUGRIV IN RETALIATION, HANUMAN STOPPED IT ON THE WAY AND BROKE IT OFF. KUMBHAKARN THEREAFTER TOOK HIS HAMMER AND BEGAN TO ATTACK THE MONKEYS AND BEARS.

LAKSHMAN STARTED TO ATTACK KUMBHAKARN WITH HIS ARROWS. BUT, KUMBHAKARN APPRECIATED THE VELOUR OF LAKSHMAN AND PROCEEDED TOWARDS RAM TO FIGHT WITH HIM. RAM RELEASED SOME ARROWS WITH 'ROUNDRA' SPELL TOWARDS KUMBHAKARN. THOSE ARROWS DISAPPEARED INTO KUMBHAKARN'S CHEST AND MADE HIM WEAPON-LESS. IN RETALIATION, KUMBHAKARN HURLED A MOUNTAIN-PEAK TOWARDS RAM AND EVEN BEFORE THE MOUNTAIN-PEAK REACHED RAM, IT WAS SPLIT UP INTO PIECES BY THE ARROWS RELEASED BY RAM. RAM EMPLOYED A GREAT MISSILE AND CHOPPED OFF ONE ARM OF KUMBHAKARN. WHEN KUMBHAKARN WITH AN UPROOTED TREE IN HIS ARM, RETALIATED BY RUNNING TOWARDS RAM, RAM WITH AN ARROW, PRESIDED OVER BY INDRA, HURLED IT ON KUMBHAKARN AND CHOPPED OFF HIS SECOND ARM, RAM THEN CHOPPED OFF THE FEET OF KUMBHAKARN WITH HIS ARROWS AND FINALLY SLASHED OFF HIS HEAD.

HEARING THE NEWS OF KUMBHAKARNA KILLED BY RAM, RAVANA THOUGHT THAT HE HAD VIRTUALLY LOST HIS RIGHT ARM. AS RAVAN WAS MOURNING FOR THE DEATH OF KUMBHAKARN, TRISHIRA (ONE OF RAVAN'S SONS) CONSOLED HIM AND SAID THAT HE WOULD GO TO THE BATTLE-FIELD AND KILL RAM. HEARING THE WORDS OF TRISHIRA, RAVAN'S OTHER SONS (DEVANTAKA, NARANTAKA AND ATIKAYA) ALSO CAME FORWARD TO JOIN THE FIGHT. THEN RAVAN SENT ALL THEM TO THE BATTLE.



THEN RAVAN SENT ALL THEM TO THE BATTLE. HE ALSO SENT MAHODARA AND MAHAPARSHVA, HIS BROTHERS TO GUARD HIS SONS. MIGHTY RAKSHAS ACCOMPANIED THEM. THE MONKEYS TOOK HUGE ROCKS AND TREES TO FIGHT WITH THE RAKSHAS. SEEING SEVERAL RAKSHAS BEING KILLED IN BATTLE, NARANTAKA ENTERED THE FIELD WITH HIS JAVELIN AND KILLED SEVERAL MONKEYS. NARANTAKA HURLED HIS JAVELIN TOWARDS ANGADA'S CHEST, BUT THE JAVELIN BROKE AND FELL DOWN. ANGADA STRIKED NARANTAKA'S HORSE WITH HIS HAND AND THE HORSE FELL DOWN DEAD. THEN, ANGADA AND NARANTAKA EXCHANGED THE BLOWS ON EACH OTHER IN BATTLE AND FINALLY, NARANTAKA DIED. MAHIRAVANA (AHIRAVAN) IN YUDDHA KANDAM

IN ANOTHER INCIDENT DURING THE WAR, RAMA AND LAKSHMANA WERE CAPTURED BY THE RAKSHAS MAHIRAVANA (OR AHIRAVAN), BROTHER OF RAVANA, WHO HELD THEM CAPTIVE IN THEIR PALACE IN PATALA (OR PATALPURI)–THE NETHERWORLD. MAHIRAVANA KEPT THEM AS OFFERINGS TO HIS DEITY. SEARCHING FOR THEM, HANUMAN REACHED PATALA, THE GATES OF WHICH WERE GUARDED BY A YOUNG CREATURE CALLED MAKARDHWAJA (KNOWN ALSO AS MAKAR-DHWAJA OR MAGAR DHWAJA), WHO WAS PART REPTILE AND PART VANARA.

THE STORY OF MAKARDHWAJA'S BIRTH IS SAID TO BE THAT WHEN HANUMAN EXTINGUISHED HIS BURNING TAIL IN THE OCEAN, A DROP OF HIS SWEAT FELL INTO THE WATERS, EVENTUALLY BECOMING MAKARDHWAJA, WHO PERCEIVED HANUMAN AS HIS FATHER. WHEN HANUMAN INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO MAKARDHWAJA, THE LATTER ASKED HIS BLESSINGS, BUT FOUGHT HIM TO FULFILL THE TASK OF GUARDING THE GATE. HANUMAN DEFEATED AND IMPRISONED HIM TO GAIN ENTRY.

UPON ENTERING PATALA, HANUMANA DISCOVERED THAT TO KILL MAHIRAVANA, HE MUST SIMULTANEOUSLY EXTINGUISH FIVE LAMPS BURNING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. HANUMAN ASSUMED THE PANCHAMUKHA OR FIVE-FACED FORM OF SRI VARAHA FACING NORTH, SRI NARASIMHA FACING SOUTH, SRI GARUDA FACING WEST, SRI HAYAGRIVA FACING THE SKY AND HIS OWN FACING THE EAST, AND BLOWS OUT THE LAMPS. HANUMAN THEN RESCUED RAM AND LAKSHMAN. AFTERWARDS, RAM ASKED HANUMAN TO CROWN MAKARDHWAJA KING OF PATALA. HANUMANA THEN INSTRUCTED MAKARDHWAJA TO RULE PATALA WITH JUSTICE AND WISDOM.

WHEN RAVANA WAS INFORMED THAT ATIKAYA, DHUMRAKSHA, AKAMPANA, PRAHADTA, KUMBHAKARN AND OTHER MIGHTY RAKSHAS HAD BEEN KILLED IN BATTLE, FELT ANXIOUS. HE FELT THAT NO DEMON WAS CAPABLE OF DEFEATING RAMA AND LAKSHMANA.

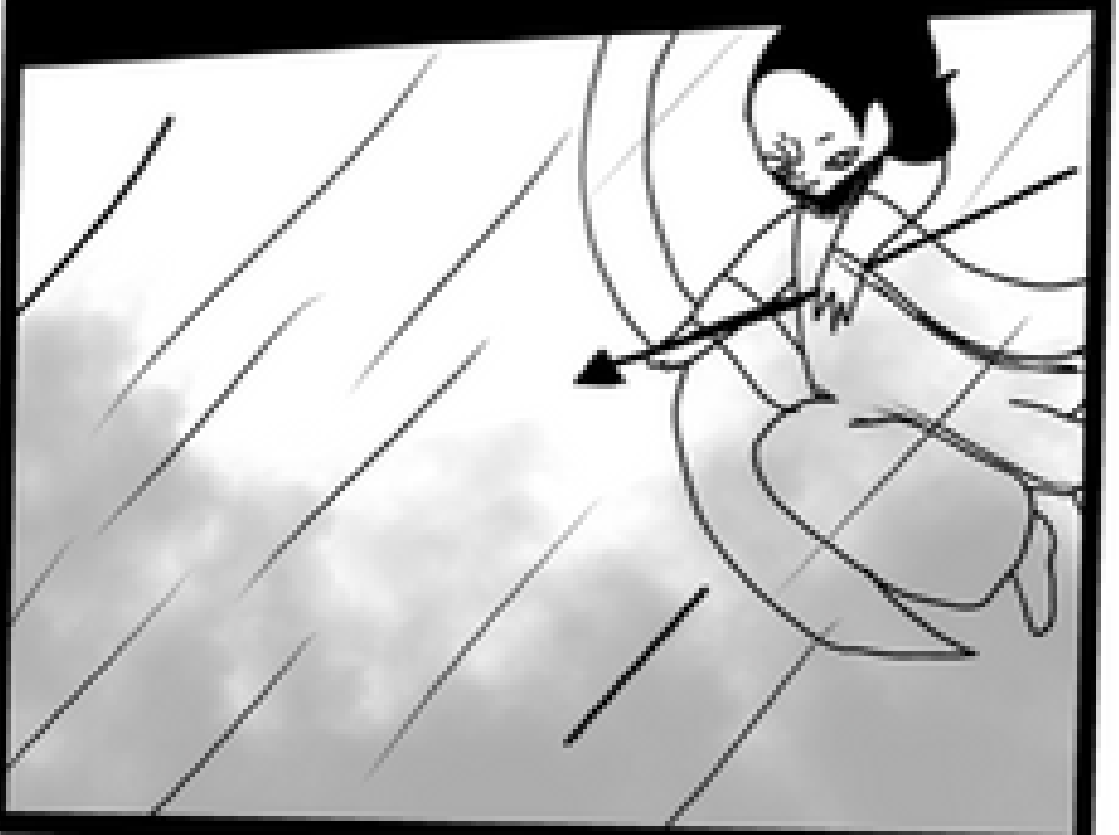
INDRAJIT MEGHANADA IN YUDDHA KANDA

SEEING RAVANA, IN DISTRESS INDRAJIT PROMISED TO KILL RAM AND LAKSHMAN. HE SET OUT FOR THE BATTLE, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS ARMY. AFTER REACHING THE BATTLE-FIELD, INDRAJIT CHALLENGED RAM AND LAKSHMA, HE FOUGHT FIERCELY, AND ARRESTED BOTH THE BROTHERS USING HIS MOST NEFARIOUS WEAPON NAGAPASH (A TRAP MADE OF MILLION SNAKES). BOTH THE BROTHERS FELL ON THE GROUND BREATHLESS. THE MONKEYS ALONG WITH HANUMAN AND ANGADA BEGAN TO GRIEVE, ON BEHOLDING THE PLIGHT OF RAM AND LAKSHMAN..

MEGHANADA INFORMED RAKSHAS ABOUT HIS ADVENTURE OF CAPTIVATING BOTH RAM AND LAKSHMAN BY NAGAPASH HIS NET WORK OF SERPENTINE ARROWS. INDRAJIT STRIKED THE OTHER MONKEY-CHIEFS LIKE . NILA, MAINDA, DVIVIDA, HANUMAN, GAVAKSHA AND ANGADA AS ALSO JAMBAVAN. SUGRIV LOOKED DEPRESSED ON SEEING THE PLIGHT OF RAM AND LAKSHMAN. VIBHISHAN ALSO FELT DISTRESSED ON PERCEIVING THE BODIES OF RAM AND LAKSHMAN LYING UNCONSCIOUS ON THE GROUND. MEANWHILE, GARUDA THE KING OF BIRDS, WHO WAS ALSO THE ENEMY OF THE SERPENTS AND ALSO THE FLYING VEHICLE OF NARAYANA MADE HIS APPEARANCE ON THE SCENE AND LIBERATED RAM AND LAKSHMAN FROM THEIR BONDAGE.

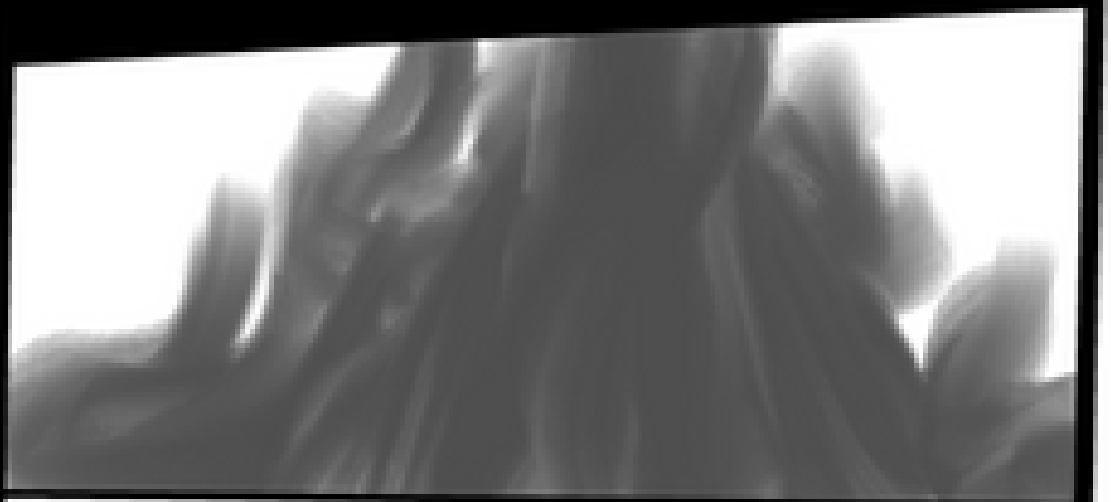
INDRAJIT, INFORMED RAVANA THAT BOTH RAM AND LAKSHMANA HAD BEEN KILLED. RAVANA APPLAUDED HIS SON FOR HIS DARING ACT. RAVAN SUMMONED SOME RAKSHASNIES INCLUDING TRIJATA AND INSTRUCTED THEM TO TAKE SITA IN PUSHPAKA-PLANE TO THE BATTLE-FRONT AND SHOW RAM AND LAKSHMAN HAD BEEN KILLED BY INDRAJIT. ACCORDINGLY, THE RAKSHASNIES TOOK SITA IN PUSHPAKA-PLANE AND SHOW HER RAM AND LAKSHMAN LYING UNCONSCIOUS ON A BED OF ARROWS IN THE BATTLE-FIELD. IMAGINING RAM AND LAKSHMAN HAD BEEN DEAD, SITA BURSTED INTO SOBS. HOWEVER, RAKSHANY TRIJATA REASSURED HER, STATING GOOD REASONS FOR RAM AND LAKSHMAN TO BE STILL ALIVE AND CHEERING HER UP, TOOK HER BACK TO ASHOKA VATIKA.

RAVANA WAS SURPRISED AS TO HOW RAM AND LAKSHMAN GOT RELEASED FROM THE BIND OF ARROWS, MADE BY INDRAJIT, HIS SON. RAVAN CALLED DHUMRAKSHA, A DEMON AND ASKED HIM TO GO WITH AN ARMY AND KILL RAM, LAKSHMAN AND THE MONKEYS DHUMRAKSHA ALONG WITH HIS ARMY ENTERED THE WESTERN GATE OF LANKA WHERE THE ARMY-CHIEF HANUMAN WAS STATIONED. A TUMULTUOUS BATTLE ENSUED BETWEEN THE RAKSHAS AND THE MONKEYS. BOTH THE MONKEYS AND RAKSHAS WERE KILLED IN LARGE NUMBERS. WHEN DHUMRAKSHA POUNCED ON HANUMAN, WHO IN TURN HITTED HIM ON HIS HEAD AND KILLED HIM RAVANA SENT VAJRADAMSTRA, ANOTHER RAKSHAS TO KILL RAM, SUGRIV AND HIS MONKEYS.



VAJRADAMSTRA AND HIS ARMY EMERGED FROM THE SOUTHERN GATE WHERE ANGADA, THE GENERAL OF THE MONKEYS WAS STATIONED. THE MONKEYS HAD A TOUGH FIGHT WITH THE RAKSHAS. ANGADA, THE LEADER OF THE MONKEYS STRIKED THE TERRIBLE STRONG RAKSHAS, CHOPPING OFF THEIR HEADS. A FIERCE BATTLE ENSUED BETWEEN VAJRADAMSHTRA AND ANGADA. ANGADA ASSAULTED VAJRADAMSHTRA WITH A SWORD AND HIS HEAD FELL ON THE GROUND.INDRAJIT, WHILE HIMSELF REMAINING INVISIBLE IN THE SKY, WITH A NETWORK OF ARROWS, INDRAJIT CREATED DARKNESS IN THE SKY AND SHOWERS A MULTITUDE OF ARROWS. STRUCK BY THE ARROWS DISCHARGED BY INDRAJIT, MONKEYS IN HUNDREDS FELL DOWN DEAD.

PLACING AN ILLUSORY LIVE IMAGE OF SITA IN HIS CHARIOT, MEGHANADA ALONG WITH HIS ARMY ENTERED THE BATTLE-FIELD. HANUMAN WITH HIS ARMY OF MONKEYS MARCH IN FRONT TO FACE INDRAJIT IN BATTLE. WHILE HANUMAN AND HIS ARMY WERE WATCHING, INDRAJIT PULLED SITA BY HER HAIR AND UNSHEATHED HIS SWORD. MEGHANADA KILLED THE ILLUSORY LIVING IMAGE OF SITA, WITH HIS SHARP SWORD. HANUMANA, WITH HIS ARMY, APPROACHED RAM AND INFORMED HIM THAT INDRAJIT HAD KILLED SITA. RAM FAINTED UPON HEARING THAT NEWS. THE MONKEYS SPRINKLE WATER ON RAM, SO THAT HE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS. VIBHISHAN TOLD RAM THE SECRET OF CONJURING TRICK PRACTICED BY INDRAJIT IN KILLING AN ILLUSORY IMAGE OF SITA.



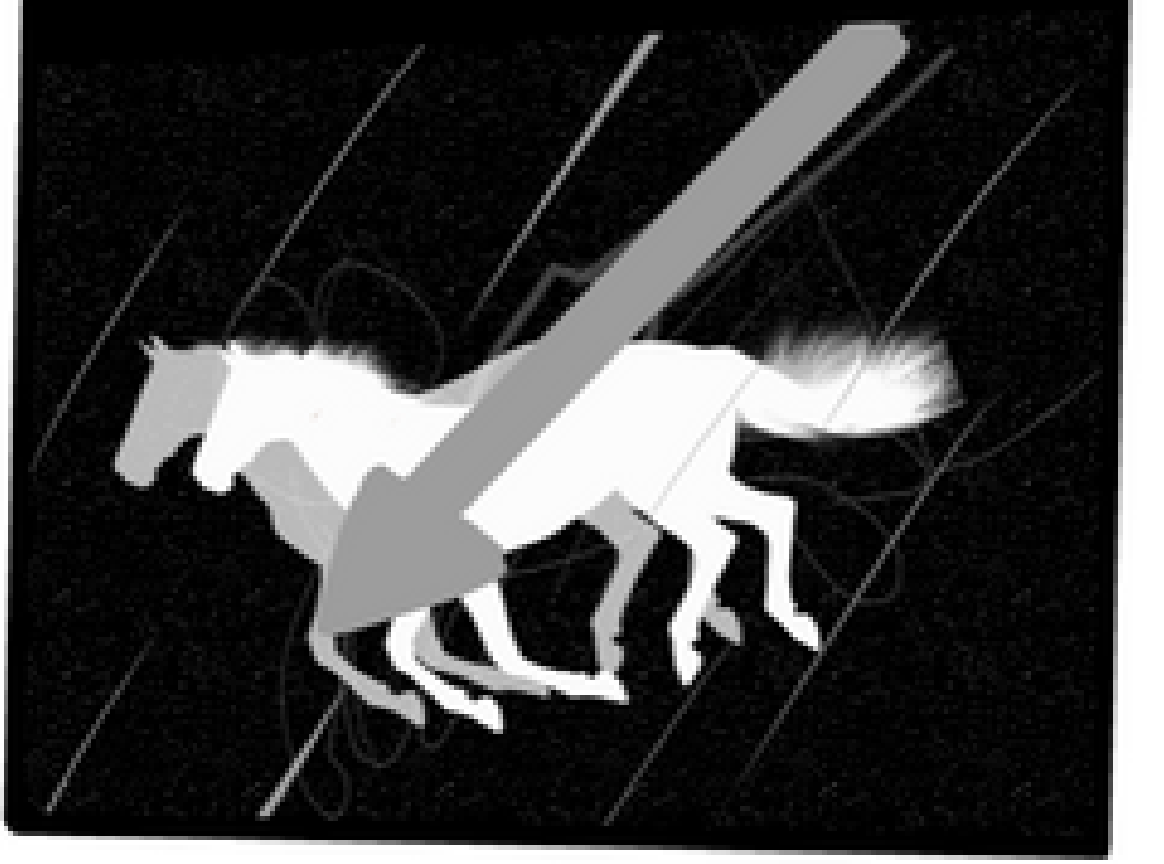
MEGHANADA FOUGHT WITH RAM'S ARMY FOR THREE DAYS. ON THIRD DAY INDRAJIT WENT TO HIS NATIVE DEITY'S SECRET TEMPLE TO PERFORM THE YAGNA THAT WOULD MAKE HIM INVINCIBLE. VIBHISHAN LEARNED OF HIS NEPHEW INDRAJIT'S ROUTINE THROUGH HIS SPIES AND SUGGESTED RAM TO SEND LAKSHMAN TO KILL INDRAJIT, EVEN BEFORE INDRAJIT COMPLETE THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE IN THE SANCTUARY OF NIKUMBHILA. RAM THEN ASKD LAKSHMAN TO PROCEED WITH THE ARMIES OF SUGRIV, HANUMA, JAMBAVAN AND VIBHISHAN. LAKSHMAN PROCEEDED TO NIKUMBHILA ALONG WITH HANUMA, VIBHISHAN AND JAMBAVAN TO KILL INDRAJIT. VIBHISHAN TOOK LAKSHMAN TO THE PLACE WHERE INDRAJIT WAS PERFORMING THE SACRIFICIAL RITE.LAKSHMAN AND VIBHISANA TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO FACE INDRAJIT IN THE "YAGNAAGAAR", WHERE INDRAJIT WOULD NOT TOUCH ANY WEAPONS. HEARING THE TERRIBLE NOISE OF THE BATTLE, INDRAJIT DISCONTINUED HIS SACRIFICIAL RITE AND ENTERED THE BATTLE-FIELD. INDRAJIT SAW VIBHISHAN THERE AND STARTED TALKING HARSH WORDS TO HIM, SAYING THAT HE HAD DITCHED HIM BY BRINGING LAKSHMAN TO THAT PLACE. VIBHISHAN REPLIED THAT BECAUSE OF RAVAN'S VICES, HE HAD LEFT HIM AND JOINED RAM'S SIDE.

MEGHANADA FOUGHT LAKSHMAN WITH THE UTENSILS OF THE YAGNA AND EVEN MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM THERE. BUT BEFORE INDRAJIT COULD GET ARMED LAKSHMAN CHOPPED HIS HEAD OFF HIS BODY. UPON HIS DEATH HIS WIFE SULOCHANA BECAME SATI ON HIS FUNERAL PYRE.

YUDDHA KANDA: RAVAN ON BATTLE FIELD

RAVANA FELT DISTRESSED IN HEARING THE NEWS OF HIS SON'S DEATH. HE GOT ENRAGED AND DECIDED TO KILL SITA, WHO WAS THE ROOT OF ALL THIS TROUBLE. RAVANA WITH A SWORD IN HIS HAND, WALKED TOWARDS ASHOKA VATIKA TO KILL SITA. SITA OBSERVED RAVAN RUSHING TOWARDS HER AND LAMENTED THAT AFTER KILLING RAM AND LAKSHMAN, HE WAS COMING TO HER PLACE TO KILL HER. SUPARSHVA, A GOOD AND UPRIGHT MINISTER OF RAVAN ADVISED RAVANA TO DIVERT HIS ANGER TOWARDS RAMA IN BATTLE. RAVAN ACCEPTED THE ADVICE OF HIS MINISTER AND RETURNED TO HIS ASSEMBLY-HALL.

RAVAN ENTERED THE BATTLE-FIELD AND WITH HIS MYSTIC MISSILES. RAM AND LAKSHMAN CAME AND ATTACKED RAVAN. THE BATTLE BETWEEN RAM AND RAVAN STARTED. INDRA SENT A CHARIOT, AN ARMOUR, SOME ARROWS AND A POWERFUL SPEAR. A TUMULTUOUS BATTLE BROKE BETWEEN RAM AND RAVAN. A SPEAR HURLED BY RAVAN WAS THWARTED BY A POWERFUL SPEAR (SENT BY INDRA) OF RAM. THEN, RAM STRIKED RAVAN'S HORSES WITH ARROWS. HE ALSO PIERCED THE CHEST REGION AND THE FOREHEAD OF RAVAN WITH HIS FIERCE ARROWS. RAVAN GOT SEVERELY HURT.



RAVAN REPROACHED THE CHARIOTEER FOR HAVING TURNED BACK HIS CHARIOT AWAY FROM THE BATTLE-FIELD. THE CHARIOTEER EXPLAINED TO RAVAN, THE VARIOUS REASONS AS TO WHY HE HAD TAKEN BACK THE CHARIOT. SATISFIED WITH THE EXPLANATION GIVEN BY HIS CHARIOTEER, RAVAN INSTRUCTED HIM TO TAKE THE CHARIOT BACK TO THE BATTLE-FIELD. THEREUPON, THE CHARIOTEER BROUGHT THE CHARIOT IN AN INSTANT BEFORE RAM ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.SEEING RAVAN'S CHARIOT COMING, RAM ASKED MATALI THE CHARIOTEER TO BE ON HIS GUARD. A FIERCE BATTLE ENSUED BETWEEN RAM AND RAVAN. RAM AND RAVAN USED ASTRAS CHARGED WITH MANTRAS. THE FIERCE ENCOUNTER CONTINUED FOR SEVEN DAYS. RAM AND RAVAN MADE FULL USE OF THE BOONS OF SIVA AND BRAHMA, AND THE MAGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF WARFARE. RAM AND RAVAN COMPETE FIERCELY, INFLICTING SEVERE INJURIES ON ONE ANOTHER WITH THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPONS RAVAN DISCHARGED ON RAM, NAGASTRA (ARROW THAT BECOMES SERPENTS FULL OF POISON). THE ARROWS HAD THEIR MOUTHS LIKE SERPENTS AND VOMIT FORTH FIRE ALL AROUND. THE RAM DISCHARGED GARUDASTRA. THE ARROWS BECAME GARUDAS AND CUT OFF THE SERPENT ARROWS ON ALL SIDES.

GARUDAS WERE THE ENEMIES OF SERPENTS. AFTER A LONG AND ARDUOUS BATTLE, RAM SUCCESSFULLY DECAPITATED RAVAN'S CENTRAL HEAD, BUT AN UGLY HEAD, SYMBOLIC OF ALL OF RAVAN'S EVIL POWERS AROSE IN ITS PLACE. AFTER ANOTHER LONG BATTLE, RAM DECAPITATED IT, ONLY TO FIND ANOTHER GROWING IN ITS PLACE. THIS CYCLE CONTINUES, AND AS DARKNESS APPROACHES, RAVAN'S MAGICAL POWERS INCREASE IN FORCE. VIBHISHAN , SEEING THIS THEN TOLD RAM THAT RAVAN HAD OBTAINED AMRITA, THE NECTAR OF IMMORTALITY, FROM THE GODS. THOUGH HE COULD NOT CONSUME IT, HE NEVERTHELESS STORED A VESSEL OF IT IN HIS STOMACH. THIS AMRIT WAS CAUSING HIS HEADS TO REGENERATE AS SOON AS THEY WERE CUT OFF. UPON THE ADVICE OF AGASTYA, RAM WORSHIPED LORD ADITYA, THE SUN, WITH THE FAMOUS ADITYA HRIDAYAM PRAYER.

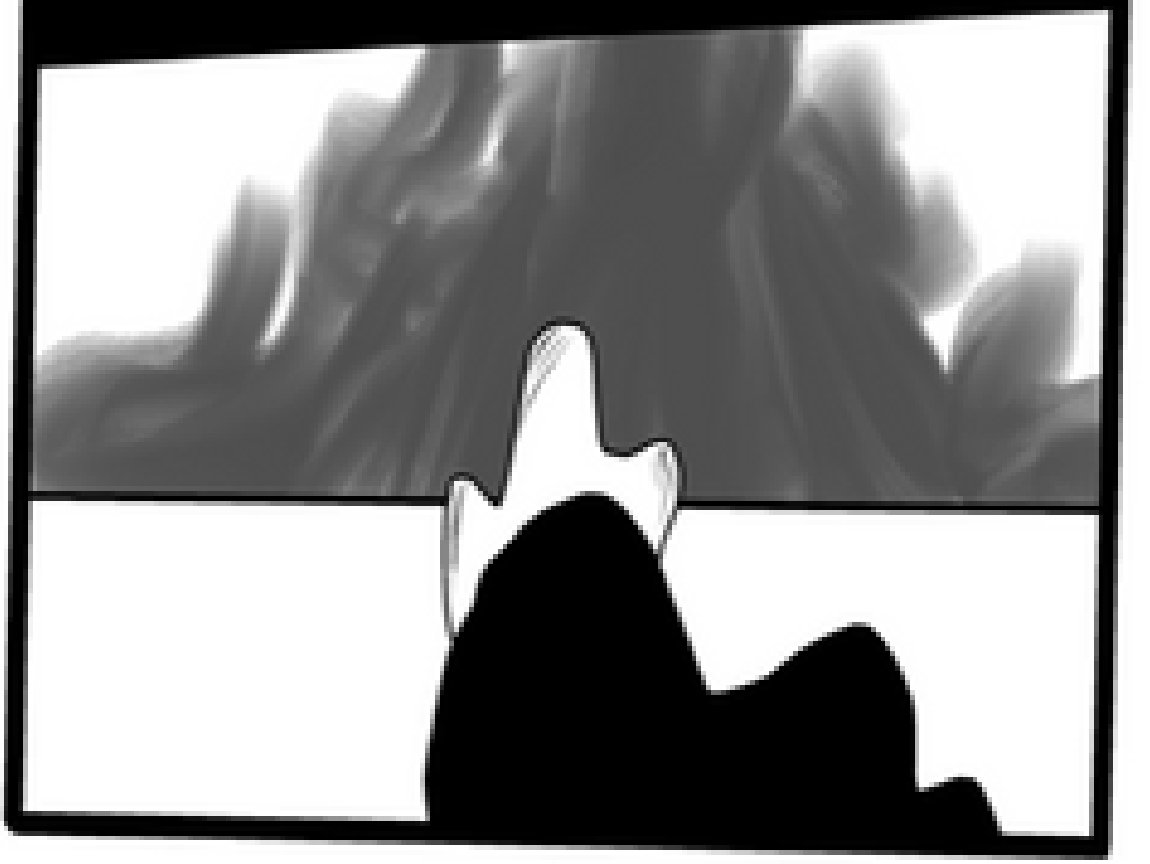
AND THEN INVOKED THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON, THE BRAHMASTRA. RAM FIRED THE GREAT ARROW THAT ENTERED RAVAN'S CHEST/STOMACH AND DESTROYED THE STORE OF AMRIT, FINALLY KILLING HIM.

MANDODARI STEERED AT THE DEAD BODY OF RAVANA. SHE COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT RAVANA, WHO HAD UNCONQUERABLE POWERS HAD BEEN KILLED BY A MORTAL LIKE RAM. BUT, SHE REALISED THAT RAM, WHO KILLED RAVAN, WAS NONE OTHER THAN VISHNU THE LORD OF MAINTENANCE OF THE WORLD. SHE ADMITTED THAT RAVAN HAD DONE A SINFUL DEED IN ABDUCTING SITA AND THAT HE HAD FACED THE CONSEQUENCE IN THE FORM OF HIS DEATH IN THE HANDS OF RAMA.

FOLLOWING RAVANA'S DEATH, VIBHISHAN WAS CROWNED THE KING OF LANKA. RAMA ASKED THE NEW KING (VIBHISHAN) AND THE SURVIVING RAKSHASAS TO PROPERLY CREMATE THEIR DEAD KING, WHO WAS A GREAT BEING WORTHY OF RESPECT AND ADMIRATION. INITIALLY, VIBHISHANA REFUSED TO PERFORM THE LAST RITES, BUT WHEN RAMA CONVINCED HIM, HE BEGAN TO PERFORM THE FUNERAL OF RAVANA.

SITA'S AGNIPARIKSHA

AFTER RAM KILLED RAVAN AND WON THE WAR, SITA WANTED TO COME BEFORE HIM IN THE STATE WHICH OVER A YEAR'S IMPRISONMENT HAD REDUCED HER TO, RAM ARRANGED FOR SITA TO BE BATHED AND GIVEN BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS BEFORE THEY WERE RE-UNITED. BUT EVEN AS SITA CAME BEFORE HIM IN GREAT EXCITEMENT AND HAPPINESS, RAM DOES NOT LOOK AT HER, STARING FIXEDLY AT THE GROUND. HE TOLD HER THAT HE HAD FOUGHT THE WAR ONLY TO AVENGE THE DISHONOUR THAT RAVAN HAD INFLICTED ON RAGHUVNAMSA AND SITA. AT THIS SUDDEN TURN OF EVENTS, ALL THE VANARAS, RAKSHADAS, SUGRIV, HANUMAN AND LAKSHMAN WERE DEEPLY SHOCKED.



SITA BEGGED LAKSHMAN TO BUILD HER A PYRE UPON WHICH SHE COULD END HER LIFE, AS SHE COULD NOT LIVE WITHOUT RAM. AT THIS POINT, LAKSHMAN WAS ANGERED AT RAM BUT FOLLOWING RAM'S NOD, HE BUILT A PYRE FOR SITA. AT THE GREAT SHOCK AND SORROW OF THE WATCHERS, SITA WALKED INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE, AGNI THE LORD OF FIRE RAISED SITA, UNHARMED, TO THE THRONE, ATTESTING TO HER PURITY. IMMEDIATELY RAM RAN TO SITA AND EMBRACED HER. HE HAD NEVER DOUBTED HER PURITY FOR A SECOND, BUT, AS HE EXPLAINED TO SITA, THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD WOULD NOT HAD ACCEPTED OR HONOURED HER AS A QUEEN OR A WOMAN IF SHE HAD NOT PASSED THIS AGNI PARIKSHA BEFORE THE EYES OF HUNDREDS, WHERE AGNI WOULD DESTROY THE IMPURE AND SINFUL, BUT NOT TOUCH THE PURE AND INNOCENT.

THERE WAS A VERSION OF TULSIDAS'S RAMCHARITAMANASA, WHICH WAS POPULAR, WHICH STATED THAT RAM HAD SITA UNDER THE PROTECTION OF AGNI GOD. AFTER SITA WAS RELEASED IT WAS NECESSARY TO BRING HER OUT OF SECURITY OF AGNI GOD. ANOTHER VERSION OF THIS WAS THAT RAM HAD KNOWN SITA WAS GOING TO BE ABDUCTED BY RAVAN AHEAD OF TIME. SO, HE ENTRUSTED HER TO AGNI DEV. RAM DID THIS SO THAT HE, WHO IN REALITY WAS VISHNU, COULD KILL RAVAN. SITA, IN TURN, LEFT BEHIND A "SHADOW", OR TWIN-LIKE VERSION OF HERSELF BEHIND. THE "SHADOW" SITA HAD BEEN ABDUCTED BY RAVAN. THEREFORE, THE LILA OF AGNI PARIKSHA WAS TO RETRIEVE THE GENUINE SITA FROM THE TEMPORARY COVERED OF AGNI DEV. RAM EXPLAINED THIS TO LAKSHMAN BEFORE THE "PARIKSHA" WAS DONE. THIS VERSION HAD ALSO BEEN WRITTEN IN THE RAM CHARIT MANAS.

RAM'S SEEING PUSHPAKA, THE DIVINE AIRCRAFT, AND RETURNING TO AYODHYA IN THAT AIRCRAFT, RAM SHOWED TO SITA, THE WHOLE CITY OF LANKA, THE BATTLE-FIELD WHERE RAVAN AND OTHER RAKSHAS WERE KILLED, NALA-SETU THE BRIDGE WHICH WAS BUILT ACROSS THE OCEAN, MOUNT MAINKA, SETU-BANDHA (WHERE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGE WAS STARTED), MOUNT RWASHYAMUKA, PAMPA RIVER, JANASTHANA-FOREST, PANCHAVATI, GODAVARI RIVER, THE HERMITAGE OF RISHI-AGASTYA, THE HERMITAGE OF ATRI AND ANASUYA, MOUNT CHITRAKUTA, YAMUNA-RIVER, THE HERMITAGE OF BHARADWAJ, GANGA-RIVER, SARAYU-RIVER . RAM MET RISHI BHARADVAJA ON HIS WAY BACK. RAM HAD ALSO SENT HANUMAN TO YODHYA TO INFORM BHARAT.

IT WAS NOW THE DAY BEFORE RAM WAS TO RETURN TO AYODHYA AFTER SERVING HIS EXILE. BHARAT WAS ANXIOUS THAT HIS BROTHER STILL HADN'T ARRIVED.. HANUMAN MET BHARAT TOLD HIM OF THE ARRIVAL OF RAM, SITA AND LAKSMAN. BHARAT, AFTER HEARING THE GOOD NEWS FROM HANUMAN CALLED SHATRUGHNA AND ASKED HIM TO MAKE APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECEPTION OF RAM IN THE CITY OF AYODHYA. BHARAT DEPARTED WITH ALL OTHERS, FOR NANDIGRAM TO RECEIVE RAM. THE PUSHPAK VIMAN LANDED AT NANDIGRAM. BHARAT WELCOMED RAM AND OTHERS, BY EMBRACING THEM AND BY GREETING THEM JOYOUSLY. RAM TOO OFFERED HIS SALUTATIONS TO ALL HIS MOTHERS, WHO CAME TO RECEIVE HIM. THEN, BHARAT BROUGHT RAM'S WOODEN SANDALS AND PLACED THEM BELOW THE FEET OF RAM. RAM, SITA AND LAKSMAN COLLECTIVELY TOUCHED THE FEET OF THE RISHI VASWASHTA ON ARRIVING IN AYODHYA AND THEREAFTER GREET ALL THAT HAD GATHERED IN THE ASSEMBLY.

RAM'S CORONATION TOOK PLACE AND HE WAS FINALLY CROWNED KING OF AYODHYA. SHORTLY AFTER RAM WAS CROWNED KING OF AYODHYA, RAM DECIDED TO CEREMONIOUSLY REWARD ALL HIS WELL-WISHERS. AT A GRAND CEREMONY IN HIS COURT, ALL HIS FRIENDS AND ALLIES TOOK TURN BEING HONOURED AT THE THRONE.

HANUMAN APPROACHED WITHOUT DESIRING A REWARD. SEEING HANUMAN CAME UP TO HIM, AN EMOTIONALLY OVERWHELMED RAM EMBRACED HIM WARMLY, DECLARING THAT HE COULD NEVER ADEQUATELY HONOUR OR REPAY HANUMAN FOR THE HELP AND SERVICES HE RECEIVED FROM THE NOBLE VANARA. SITA, HOWEVER, INSISTED THAT HANUMAN DESERVED HONOUR MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, AND SITA GAVE HIM A NECKLACE OF PRECIOUS STONES ADORNING HER NECK.

WHEN HE RECEIVED IT, HANUMANA IMMEDIATELY TOOK IT APART, AND PEERED INTO EACH STONE. TAKEN ABACK, MANY OF THOSE PRESENT DEMANDED TO KNOW WHY HE WAS DESTROYING THE PRECIOUS GIFT. HANUMAN ANSWERED THAT HE WAS LOOKING INTO THE STONES TO MAKE SURE THAT RAM AND SITA WERE IN THEM, BECAUSE IF THEY WERE NOT, THE NECKLACE WAS OF NO VALUE TO HIM. AT THIS, A FEW MOCKED HANUMAN, SAYING HIS REVERENCE AND LOVE FOR RAMA AND SITA COULD NOT POSSIBLY BE AS DEEP AS HE IMPLIED. IN RESPONSE, HANUMANA TEARED HIS CHEST OPEN, AND EVERYONE WAS STUNNED TO SEE RAMA AND SITA LITERALLY IN HIS HEART.

CONCLUSION

DASHARATHA WAS THE KING OF AYODHYA AND HAD THREE WIVES AND FOUR SONS. RAMA WAS THE ELDEST AND HIS MOTHER WAS KAUSHALYA. BHARATA WAS THE SON OF DASHARATHA'S SECOND AND FAVORITE WIFE, QUEEN KAIKEYI. THE OTHER TWO WERE TWINS, LAKSHMANA AND SHATRUGHNA WHOSE MOTHER WAS SUMITHRA. IN THE NEIGHBORING CITY THE RULER'S DAUGHTER WAS NAMED SITA. WHEN IT WAS TIME FOR SITA TO CHOOSE HER BRIDEGROOM (AT A CEREMONY CALLED A SWAYAMVARA) PRINCES FROM ALL OVER THE LAND WERE ASKED TO STRING A GIANT BOW WHICH NO ONE COULD LIFT. HOWEVER, AS RAMA PICKED IT UP, HE NOT ONLY STRUNG THE BOW, HE BROKE IT. SEEING THIS, SITA INDICATED THAT SHE HAD CHOSEN RAMA AS HER HUSBAND BY PUTTING A GARLAND AROUND HIS NECK. THEIR LOVE BECAME A MODEL FOR THE ENTIRE KINGDOM AS THEY LOOKED OVER THE KINGDOM UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF HIS FATHER THE KING.

A FEW YEARS LATER, KING DASHARATHA DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO GIVE HIS THRONE TO HIS ELDEST SON RAMA AND RETIRE TO THE FOREST. EVERYONE SEEMED PLEASED, SAVE QUEEN KAIKEYI SINCE SHE WANTED HER SON BHARATA TO RULE. BECAUSE OF AN OATH DASHARATHA HAD MADE TO HER YEARS BEFORE, SHE GOT THE KING TO AGREE TO BANISH RAMA FOR FOURTEEN YEARS AND TO CROWN BHARATA, EVEN THOUGH THE KING PLEADED WITH HER NOT TO DEMAND SUCH A REQUEST. THE DEVASTATED KING COULD NOT FACE RAMA AND IT WAS QUEEN KAIKEYI WHO TOLD RAMA THE KING'S DECREE. RAMA, ALWAYS OBEDIENT, WAS CONTENT TO GO INTO BANISHMENT IN THE FOREST. SITA AND LAKSHMANA ACCOMPANIED HIM ON HIS EXILE.

ONE DAY RAMA AND LAKSHMANA WOUNDED A RAKSHASAS (DEMON) PRINCESS WHO TRIED TO SEDUCE RAMA. SHE RETURNED TO HER BROTHER RAVANA, THE TEN-HEADED RULER OF LANKA. IN RETALIATION, RAVANA DEVISED A PLAN TO ABDUCT SITA AFTER HEARING ABOUT HER INCOMPARABLE BEAUTY. HE SENT ONE OF HIS DEMONS DISGUISED AS A MAGICAL GOLDEN DEER TO ENTICE SITA. TO PLEASE HER, RAMA AND LAKSHMANA WENT TO HUNT THE DEER DOWN. BEFORE THEY DID THOUGH, THEY DREW A PROTECTIVE CIRCLE AROUND SITA AND TOLD HER THAT SHE WOULD BE SAFE FOR AS LONG AS SHE DID NOT STEP OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE. AFTER RAMA AND LAKSHMANA LEFT, RAVANA APPEARED AS A HOLY MAN BEGGING ALMS. THE MOMENT SITA STEPPED OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE TO GIVE HIM FOOD, RAVANA GRABBED HER AND CARRIED HER TO HIS KINGDOM IN LANKA.

THE RAMAYANA

THE RAMAYANA IS AN ANCIENT SANSKRIT EPIC WHICH FOLLOWS PRINCE RAMA'S QUEST TO RESCUE HIS BELOVED WIFE SITA FROM THE CLUTCHES OF RAVANA WITH THE HELP OF AN ARMY OF MONKEYS. IT IS TRADITIONALLY ATTRIBUTED TO THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE SAGE VALMIKI AND DATED TO AROUND 500 BCE TO 100 BCE.